Sugar prices

811. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether with the onset of festival season the sugar prices are still ruling high in the retail market;

(b) whether Government has asked sugar mills to start releasing extra sugar under free sale quota and the two million tonnes buffer stocks sale permitted by Government; and

(c) whether the present scarcity of sugar in open market is caused by hoarding, speculative activity and the mills reneging on their free sale quota?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The Central Government released additional quota of 5 lac tons of non-levy sugar – 3 lac tons for the month of August, 2008 and 2 lac tons for the month of September, 2008. Further, the Central Government also allowed producers of sugar to sell dismantled buffer stock of 20 lac tons (dismantled on 01.05.2008) in the domestic market by 30th September, 2008 without the requirement of release orders of the Central Government.

(c) There is no scarcity of sugar in the country and sugar is adequately available in the market.

Increase in prices of foodgrains

812. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has been seized of the incidences of high increase in prices of foodgrains and other items of common consumption consistently during the last four years;

(b) if so, whether Government have been seized of the substantial erosion of the purchasing power, particularly of the agricultural and industrial labourers, daily wage earners in unorganized sectors as a consequence thereof;

(c) if so, whether Planning Commission has conducted any review of their parameters which determine poverty level in the light thereof with a view to up-date the same;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Government is aware of the increase in prices of some essential commodities during the last four years.

(b) (i) The Consumer Price Index Numbers can indicate the change in purchasing power of the consumers. All-India Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers on base 1982=100 for the period January, 2003 to December, 2005 and on base 2001=100 for the period from January, 2006 to August, 2008 are as under: